

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 01242 141514Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 PRS-01 CU-02 /049 W
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R 141437Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3431
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 1242

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CI, CA
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE NEW CHILEAN AMBASSADOR TO CANADA

REFS: (A) MADRID 0832, (B) OTTAWA 0523

1. CANADIAN DCM HAS DISCUSSED WITH EMBOFFS CHILEAN GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL OF MARIO ARNELLO ROMO AS AMBASSADOR TO CANADA. WE TOLD HIM THAT ARNELLO HAS BEEN WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO US FOR YEARS (INCLUDING A LEADER GRANT IN THE 1960'S), BUT THAT HIS STRONGLY CONSERVATIVE POSITION AND HARD LINE ATTITUDE ON CURRENT CHILEAN AND WORLD AFFAIRS SEEMED TO US TO MAKE HIM A POOR CHOICE FOR OTTAWA. THUS, HIS VIEWS ARE NOW SO EXTREME THAT HE HAS LARGELY LOST HIS USEFULNESS TO US AS A CONTACT.

2. ARNELLO RECEIVED PART OF HIS EDUCATION IN SPAIN AND IS A STRONG ADMIRER OF FRANCO. THERE WERE STORIES THAT HE WAS A CANDIDATE FOR THE MADRID EMBASSY TWO YEARS AGO. AS A NATIONAL PARTY DEPUTY HE FOUGHT ALLENDE HARD AND WELL. SINCE THE SEPTEMBER 1973 MILITARY COUP, HE HAS HEADED LAN-CHILE'S LEGAL STAFF AND HAS BEEN ONE OF THE OLD POLITICIANS RECRUITED TO REPRESENT CHILE DURING UNGA SESSIONS. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT ARNELLO IS CONNECTED WITH CHILEAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES.

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3. AT OUR LAST MEETING, THE CANADIAN DCM WAS THINKING TO RECOMMEND THAT OTTAWA INDICATE DISCREETLY TO THE GOC THAT ARNELLO AS AMBASSADOR WOULD LIKELY DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD TO BILATERAL RELATIONS, IN VIEW OF THE REACTION TO HIS APPOINTMENT THAT COULD BE EXPECTED FROM THE CANADIAN PUBLIC.

4. COMMENT: THE ARNELLO CASE IS INDICATIVE OF THE NARROWNESS OF THE BASE OF CANDIDATES SUITABLE TO REPRESENT CHILE ABROAD. THE MAY RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS NAMED AMBASSADORES TEND TO BE MORE DISTINGUISHED FOR THEIR LOYALTY TO THE REGIME THAT FOR THEIR DIPLOMATIC ABILITY. THE CARRER DIPLOMATIC SERVICE IS SMALL, HAS BEEN PURGED, AND IS NOT COMPLETELY TRUSTED BY CHILE'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP. THE CIVILIANS OF AMBASSADORIAL QUALITY WHOM THE GOC TRUSTS AND WHO ARE WILLING TO SERVE TEND TO BE SO CONSERVATIVE OR REACTIONARLY POLITICALLY THAT THEY ARE NOT USEFUL IN A COUNTRY LIKE CANADA.
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Message Attributes

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